

Message Text

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ORIGIN INR-07

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00

NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 EUR-12 NEA-09 ACDA-05

ERDA-05 OES-03 (ISO) R

DRAFTED BY INR/PMT:CDR PATTON:CW

APPROVED BY PM/ISO:COL FJFLEMINGS

PM/ISP - MR BRECKON

S/PRS - MR PERNICK

EUR/SOV- MR MONTGOMERY

DOD/ISA/NESA - COL ELLIS

AF/I - MR ANDEREGG

DOD/OP611 - CDR HANKINS

PM/ISO - CAPT PASZTALANIEC

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CNO

S E C R E T STATE 076534

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, MP, UR, XO

SUBJECT:SOVIET NAVAL PRESENCE IN INDIAN OCEAN

REF: PORT LOUIS 0143

1. THE INFORMATION IN PARAS 2-6 BELOW, REQUESTED BY
REFTEL, IS CLASSIFIED SECRET NOFORN AND PROVIDED FYI.
IN RESPONSE TO LOCAL PRESS INQUIRIES WE WOULD PREFER
THAT YOU TAKE THE FOLLOWING GENERAL TACK: QUOTE: THE
SOVIET UNION HAS REGULARIZED ITS PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN
OCEAN THROUGH THE CONTINUOUS DEPLOYMENT THERE OF A NUM-
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BER OF ITS WARSHIPS AND THROUGH ROUTINE USE OF THE PORT

FACILITIES IN CERTAIN LITTORAL COUNTRIES. THERE IS EVIDENCE OF SOVIET DEVELOPMENT OF EXTENSIVE NAVAL SUPPORT FACILITIES, FOR INSTANCE, IN SOMALIA. THE NUMBERS OF SOVIET COMBATANT SHIPS AND SUPPORT VESSELS HAVE RISEN STEADILY OVER THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, AND WILL PROBABLY INCREASE FURTHER. UNQUOTE.

2. BEGIN NOFORN FYI: THE SOVIET NAVY INDIAN OCEAN CONTINGENT NORMALLY CONSISTS OF ABOUT 8 WARSHIPS, RANGING IN TYPES FROM A CRUISER TO MINESWEEPERS AND AMPHIBIOUS SHIPS. THIS GROUP ALSO INCLUDES ONE CONVENTIONAL SUBMARINE, FREQUENTLY ALSO ONE NUCLEAR-POWERED

SUBMARINE, AND ABOUT 10 SUPPORT SHIPS. THIS FORCE SELDOM CONDUCTS EXERCISES AT SEA; IT IS USUALLY FOUND EITHER AT ANCHOR IN THE VICINITY OF SOCOTRA ISLAND OR IN PORT, PRINCIPALLY AT BERBERA, SOMALIA. SEAGOING ACTIVITIES HAVE CONSISTED MAINLY OF AN INTELLIGENCE GATHERING PATROL IN THE STRAITS OF HORMUZ, TRAILING AND SURVEILLANCE OF US AND OTHER MAJOR WESTERN NAVAL FORCES, AND INVOLVEMENT IN SPECIAL OPERATIONS RELATED TO LITTORAL COUNTRIES (E.G. HARBOR CLEARING OPERATIONS IN BANGLADESH AND MINE CLEARING IN THE STRAIT OF JUBAL).

3. THE PORT OF BERBERA NOW SERVES AS THE PRINCIPAL SOVIET LOGISTICS BASE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. IN ADDITION TO A SHELTERED HARBOR AND PIER FACILITIES, BERBERA PROVIDES A SOVIET-CONSTRUCTED FUEL DEPOT, A COMMUNICATIONS STATION AND PROBABLY A CRUISE MISSILE HANDLING FACILITY. A SOVIET NUCLEAR-POWERED ATTACK SUBMARINE IS KNOWN TO HAVE BEEN IN PORT AT BERBERA EARLY LAST JANUARY.

4. DAFAT AIRFIELD NEAR MOGADISCIO HAS BEEN CONSTRUCTED BY THE SOVIETS AND IS NOW NEARING COMPLETION. IT IS CAPABLE OF HANDLING SOVIET LONG-RANGE OCEAN SURVEILLANCE AIRCRAFT, ALTHOUGH NONE HAVE YET APPEARED IN THE AREA. THE VISIT OF ADMIRAL GORSHKOV, COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE SOVIET NAVY, TO SOMALIA LAST DECEMBER
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MAY HAVE BEEN FOR THE PURPOSE OF INSPECTING AIR AND NAVAL FACILITIES.

5. THE FREQUENCY OF VISITS TO WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN PORTS OTHER THAN BERBERA REMAINED RELATIVELY CONSTANT DURING THE YEARS 1970 THROUGH 1975. ON THE EAST COAST OF AFRICA, SOVIET COMBAT AND SUPPORT SHIPS VISITED MOMBASA, KENYA EACH YEAR EXCEPT 1971 AND HAVE SPENT

FROM FIVE TO TWENTY-EIGHT SHIP DAYS THERE PER YEAR. BOTH COMBAT AND SUPPORT SHIPS ALSO VISITED MOGADISCIO, SOMALIA EACH YEAR AND SPENT FROM FOUR TO EIGHTY-TWO SHIP DAYS THERE PER YEAR. SOVIET NAVAL SHIPS HAVE NOT VISITED CHISIMAI, SOMALIA SINCE 1971 OR DAR ES SALAAM, TANZANIA SINCE 1970. THE NUMBER OF VISITS TO BERBERA AND THE LENGTH OF VISITS HAVE INCREASED AS THE FACILITIES THERE HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED. COMBAT SHIP VISITS HAVE GROWN FROM ELEVEN IN 1970 (116 SHIP DAYS) TO FORTY-ONE IN 1974 (308 SHIP DAYS). SUPPORT SHIP VISITS HAVE GROWN FROM TWO (20 SHIP DAYS) IN 1970 TO TWENTY-ONE IN 1974 (181 SHIP DAYS). IN ADDITION, A SOVIET COMBINED BARRACKS AND REPAIR SHIP

HAS BEEN STATIONED IN BERBERA SINCE THE FALL OF 1972.

6. DATA ON SOVIET NAVY PORT VISITS TO ADEN, PDRY IS INCOMPLETE, BUT THEY PROBABLY WERE ABOUT THE SAME NUMBER (8 OR 9 VISITS IN 1974 AS IN 1973). VISITS TO PORT LOUIS BY BOTH COMBAT AND SUPPORT SHIPS HAVE BEEN STABLE SINCE 1972. COMBAT SHIP VISITS HAVE AVERAGED TWO OR THREE PER YEAR (12 TO 30 SHIP DAYS), AND SUPPORT SHIPS HAVE AVERAGED FIVE TO EIGHT PER YEAR (32 TO 49 SHIP DAYS). END NOFORN FYI. INGERSOLL

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